

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 22, 2001 (BOS Mtg. 2/6/01)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Application No. SE-8-01, Bethel Baptist Church

ISSUE

This application seeks a special exception to the height limitations in the Rural Residential zoning district pursuant to Section 24.1-231(b) of the Zoning Ordinance (Exemptions from Height Limitations) to allow the construction of a church worship center with cupola for Bethel Baptist Church located at 1004 Yorktown Road (Route 706). The parcel is further identified as Assessor's Parcel Nos. 30-187 and 30-188.

DESCRIPTION

- Property Owner: Bethel Baptist Church
- Location: 1004 Yorktown Road (Route 706)
- Area: 14.9 Acres
- Frontage: 1,200 feet along Yorktown Road
- Utilities: Public water and sewer service are available to the property
- Topography: Mostly flat
- 2015 Land Use Map Designation: Low Density Residential
- Zoning Classification: RR – Rural Residential
- Existing Development: Bethel Baptist Church
- Surrounding Development:
 - North: Single family detached home
 - East: Yorktown Road
 - South: Tabb High School
 - West: Undeveloped wooded property
- Proposed Development: Church worship center with cupola

CONSIDERATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

1. This application seeks a special exception to the height limitations in the Rural Residential zoning district pursuant to Section 24.1-231(b) of the Zoning Ordinance (Exemptions from Height Limitations) to allow the construction of a church worship center with cupola for Bethel Baptist Church located at 1004 Yorktown Road. The height limitation for non-residential structures in the RR (Rural Residential) zoning district is 35'. The church is seeking an exemption for a total structure height of 84'6". The total height includes a worship center main building height and the cross on top (please see attached plan). The Comprehensive Plan designated this property for low density residential uses.
2. The church submitted a proposed conceptual design for the new worship center that indicates a 1,000-member seating capacity. The worship center is permitted by right in the RR zoning district. According to the church, an assembly space of this capacity requires a large volume of building space (and height) for acoustics and spatial environment. A square cupola with clerestory will be used to bring natural light into the nave and symbolically denote a place of worship. Consequently, the architectural design parameters of the church's addition necessitated the proposed increase in height that exceeds the height limitations established in this zoning district. The addition to the church will be constructed on the southern end of the existing church structure, which is located away from the adjacent residential property to the west. The church's addition, including the structure and the additional parking, will have to meet the site plan requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.
3. According to Section 24.1-231(a) of the Zoning Ordinance, "Church spires, belfries, cupolas, monuments, chimneys, water towers, fire towers, cooling towers, radio and television antennas may be permitted [administratively] to exceed the height stipulated in the district regulations by no more than twenty-five percent (25%) if attached to a building, or to a maximum of one hundred feet (100') [30m] if free-standing." However, according to Section 24.1-231(b), "The board, after conducting a duly advertised public hearing, may authorize exemptions to the height regulations that exceed those which may be authorized administratively." The Board can only exempt those things that can be exempted administratively. Section 24.1-231(b) further states, "In granting exemptions, the board may impose reasonable conditions. No exemption may be granted which violates the terms of the airport safety management overlay district."
4. The surrounding development of the subject property consists of a mix of institutional and rural residential uses. East of the church property, located on the other side of Yorktown Road, is the Charles Church Christian Life Center. South of the site is Tabb High School and Fire Station No. 2. A 150' communications tower stands on the fire station property to provide emergency communication and cellular/digital phone service. The remainder of the surrounding uses are single family detached homes. The proposed worship center appears to fit well with this mix of uses.

RECOMMENDATION

The church's plan to add a worship center with cupola that exceeds the height limitation of the zoning district will have little or no impact on the surrounding properties. The proposed church addition with cupola should complement the existing structure and enhance the church's ability to serve its members and the community. The proposed cupola will not violate the terms of the airport safety management overlay district. Therefore, based on the above considerations and conclusions, I recommend that the Board approve this application. This may be accomplished with the adoption of proposed Resolution No. R01-16.

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Attachments

- Zoning Map
- Vicinity Map
- Conceptual plans
- Proposed Resolution No. R01-16